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THE POETICAL TASTES OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

It is probable that the third President has but seldom been thought of as a poet or as one of discriminating poetical tastes, though a certain scholar and critic has recently asserted that the Declaration of Independence has a marked lyrical quality; yet in a character so versatile as that of Jefferson we should not draw limits too hastily, and accordingly should not be disconcerted by the caption of this paper. Jefferson's love for music and his skill as a performer on the violin are well known; and the facts to follow will justify the suspicion that he may have been something of a poet, or at least that he was a reader and lover of poetry.

For fiction — prose fiction — Jefferson had so little taste, it is said, that the list of his readings in that branch of literature probably embraced little beyond the works of Sterne and Fielding, a part of those of Smollett, Marmontel's *Tales*, *Gil Blas*, and *Don Quixote*. The last was perhaps the only novel he ever keenly relished or read a second time. But in poetry he was a wide and interested reader. Among the ancient classics his special favorites were Homer, the Greek dramatists, and Horace. Equally entertaining to him were Tasso, Molière, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Pope. He admired Virgil and Dante, but read them less; and with them may be classed Corneille. Petrarch was not to his taste, though in his lighter moods he enjoyed Metastasio and frequently turned to him. The old English ballads, the later pastoral and lyrical poems, and the pleasing melodies of several of the minor Italian poets were much to his liking; so much so that he not infrequently sought entertainment in writing out neat copies of those numbers that pleased him most. "Lovely Peggy," "Tweedside," "Mary of Tweed," and an old pastoral beginning,

"It rains, it rains, my fair,
Come drive your white sheep past;
Let's to my shed repair,
Haste, Shepherdess, make haste,"

are among the pieces that have been preserved in his early handwriting. Scraps of Shenstone have also been found scrib-

bled on some of his early manuscripts; but he is said to have admired that author's description of his estate of Leasowes more than his pastorals.

But it was Ossian that aroused Jefferson's poetic instincts most thoroughly. Macpherson published the *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* just about the time that the tall youth from Albemarle was beginning his student life at old Williamsburg; and within the next two or three years *Fingal* and *Temora* appeared. These productions were hailed with enthusiasm by the young Virginia student. "There was something," says one of his biographers, "in the high-wrought objective descriptions, in the wild, grand imagery, that captivated him, and for once our practicalist and utilitarian came almost to see like his Cherokee friend, Ontassetè, the forms of heroes in clouds, and to hear their clashing shields in the elemental strife." With a disregard of labor that was characteristic of him when mental enjoyments were in view, he at once resolved to study the Gaelic language, in order that he might be enabled to read Ossian in the original; and in accordance with this purpose he actually wrote to one of Macpherson's relatives in Scotland, a gentleman who had for a while resided in Virginia, requesting his assistance in procuring, if possible, a Gaelic grammar and dictionary, with a manuscript copy of the original poems. If Dr. Johnson had known all this, his comment would doubtless have been interesting. Jefferson's earnestness did go to a point at which it almost ceases to be serious to us. He begged his correspondent to spare no expense in the matter, "the glow of one warm thought being worth more than money;" and he "was not ashamed to own that he thought this rude bard of the North the greatest poet that had ever existed."¹ As late as 1781 and 1782 Jefferson and a celebrated Frenchman, General the Marquis de Chastellux, were found one evening at Monticello reciting passages from Ossian with gusto round a punch-bowl. For some years before his death, however, he came to value these poems less highly, and but seldom took the volume containing them from the shelf.

¹ See Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, Vol. I, page 29.

With so much by way of introduction, let us now come to an acquaintance with the specific basis of this study: A worn and ancient-looking volume of miscellaneous poems. With the book before me, I may describe it as an ordinary-looking octavo, six by nine inches, and two inches thick; with back and corners of leather, and sides of paper. As already stated, it is worn and old; and, as shall appear as we proceed, its actual age is slightly over one hundred years. It is a scrap-book, in which are 196 pages, with several unused blank pages at the beginning and as many more at the end. The volume bears some evidence of having been re-sewed years ago; and some of the pages seem to be out of their original order: a few, indeed, appear to be missing altogether.

The volume under consideration is a scrap-book made by Jefferson, and filled with verses of a higher or lower poetic quality, clipped from the newspapers of a century ago. It is now the property of the University of Virginia, and may be found in the library of that institution; but, so far as I am aware, nothing has ever been published concerning it heretofore.

It is a scrap-book in a double sense; for not only is it filled with clippings, but it is itself constructed from a number of miscellaneous scraps of paper. In all probability it was not purchased ready-made for the use to which it was put, but was made, at least in its first stages, by the same careful hands that collected the various poems and pasted them in place. The materials used in constructing the book were old letters, letter wrappers, printed sheets, and a few blank sheets of paper, varying much in hue, quality, and weight. Some of the printed sheets have upon them lines and paragraphs in English; some contain sentences in French. One of the letters is addressed to "Honble Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, City of Washington," and was mailed at "Steubenville," doubtless Steubenville, Ohio; but, as we should naturally expect, most of the letters used are taken from Jefferson's own files. Some were sent to him at Monticello, but most were directed to Washington. In some he is addressed in democratic fashion as merely "Thomas Jefferson;" in others as "The President of the

United States;" and in one as "Thomas Jefferson, Esqr., President of the U. S."

One cannot be quite certain whether the book was first made for the purpose of collecting clippings, or whether the clippings were first pasted on loose sheets, which were afterwards bound; but, as already intimated, it seems probable that the latter method was the one followed. If the book had been ordered in advance from a binder the latter would likely have used, in making it, materials of uniform quality. Furthermore, it is known that Jefferson, in his second compilation of the "Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth," commonly spoken of as "Jefferson's Bible," cut the selected passages from the several editions of the New Testament and pasted them on prepared sheets, which were afterward shipped to Richmond for binding. It seems probable, therefore, that a similar order of procedure was followed in the case now under consideration.

On one of the fly-leaves of the old volume is written:

To
A. T. LAIRD,—
from E. R. CHAMBERS
Boynton Va.
Sept. 2, 1841.

A letter pasted inside the first lid reads as follows:

Com: University Library,
Gentlemen,

Mr. Jefferson left in his library two scrap-books, which, it is said were compiled by his own hands during the term of his political administration. One of these antique volumes was presented to Mr. Ewd. R. Chambers of Mecklenburg, Va., and, by him to me, some years since. I propose to place the same at the disposal of the proper authorities of the University Library. If in their judgement it shall be deemed worthy a position among the relicks of its supposed author, I shall be gratified at its acceptance.

Respectfully, Yrs. &c.

A. T. LAIRD.

Staunton Va.
April 8th, 1851.

Before going further it may be well to take cognizance of the implication near the end of Mr. Laird's letter, to the effect that it may be somewhat doubtful whether the book in question is really Jefferson's work. Against this point of uncertainty it should be sufficient to oppose the first part of the same letter, from which it appears that the writer was morally certain that the work was Mr. Jefferson's. The date, September 1, 1841, upon which the volume was presented to Mr. Laird, was only fifteen years after Jefferson's death; and Mr. Chambers, who received the book from Jefferson's estate and gave it to Mr. Laird, was doubtless able to transmit with the gift its true history.

It is a well-known fact that Jefferson made other books of similar character, as far as methods of construction are concerned. The second of the two scrap-books referred to by Mr. Laird was in all probability the famous so-called "Bible," mentioned above. This volume, in both its earlier and later forms, was Jefferson's own work beyond a doubt; and the collection of verses before us shows the same careful workmanship and ingenious arrangement that characterize the "Bible." Moreover, the fact that nearly all of the letters used in building up the volume were letters addressed to Jefferson, is in itself almost conclusive proof that Jefferson made the book or prepared the sheets for it. That he should have had among his own letters one addressed to his Secretary of Treasury, Gallatin, and have used it as already indicated, is not remarkable, and does not seriously affect our conclusions.

Most of the poems in the old scrap-book are short, such as are usually found in newspapers. They number in all 420. Songs and odes predominate; and concerning many of these it is stated that they were written for Fourth of July celebrations. There are occasional sonnets, but most of the pieces do not follow any special or distinct form. Patriotic and political themes are most numerous, as we should expect, though there are a few poems on nature and a larger number on human nature, in its finer aspects. Death is a frequent subject, and there are several formal elegies.

Although the arrangement of the clippings seems at first glance to be without logical method, a more careful scrutiny

will reveal the fact that there was evidently an effort made to put things of the same sort together. First in the volume comes a small group of poems that may be termed personal. In them Jefferson himself is the inspiring subject, and he is referred to in various complimentary terms, such as "The People's Friend," "freedom's favourite," etc. The very first piece in the collection is headed, "Jefferson and Liberty;" and several other compositions at various places in the body of the volume employ the same expression — one that must have been very pleasing to the great apostle of democracy.

The second group is made up of three or four songs and odes on "Columbia," the Fourth of July, etc.; and then follow a brief series on Washington, Adams, and Federalism. The two songs on the last subject, one to be sung to the tune, "The leaves so green O," the other to "Yankey Doodle, Maggy Lauder, Wilkes' Wriggle, or the Vicar of Bray," are, as one might expect, strongly alive with a boisterous satire; while the one on Washington, entitled, "Ode to Columbia's Favourite Son," is a serious and not altogether unsuccessful attempt to pay sincere homage in lofty verse to the memory of a great man. The editor's appended remark, "This excellent specimen of sublime Poetry and genuine Patriotism has justly obtained the first rank as a National Song," is interesting historically, and at the same time affords a striking illustration of the fact that time is the keenest as well as the kindest critic. The writer of the ode is not named, though he is spoken of as one well known.

Fourth comes a group of pieces on liberty, patriotism, freedom, and kindred themes; and then another small group of personal poems. One of the latter is on Washington; another is on King George III: "Ode for His Majesty's Birth-Day, 1804. By H. J. Pye, Esq., P.L." This ode, written to be "performed" at St. James's, and in all probability clipped from a London paper, is a most cordial tribute to the British monarch, and affords a pleasing contrast to the catalogue of charges made against him in the Declaration of Independence. Had advancing age and the triumph of his cause made Jefferson more charitable? It would seem so; else the hand that had penned

the fierce arraignment of '76 would hardly have taken the pains to preserve this tribute of 1804.

Then follow more pieces on the Fourth of July, on Washington, on Liberty, the Commonwealth, Columbia, Columbia's Eagle, and Columbia's Pride, with occasional tributes to Jefferson. Next come eight compositions on the Embargo—some pro, some con, but mainly pro. A special effort was no doubt made to collect the metrical arguments in favor of the measure; but Jefferson's sense of humor was evidently too keen to pass by such opposing lines as the following:

“Our great politicians,
Those dealers in visions,
On paper, to all lengths they dare go,
But when call'd to decide,
Like a turtle they hide,
In their own pretty shell, the Embargo.

“In the time that we try
To put out Britain's eye,
I fear we shall let our own pair go;
Yet still we're so wise,
We can see with French eyes,
And then we shall like the Embargo.

“A French privateer
Can have nothing to fear;
She may load and may here or may there go,
Their friendship is such,
And we love them so much,
We let them slip through the Embargo.

“Our ships all in motion,
Once whiten'd the ocean,
They sail'd and return'd with a cargo;
Now doom'd to decay,
They have fallen a prey
To Jefferson, worms and Embargo.”

An editorial note informs us that the song in which the above lines appear was “composed by Henry Mellen, Esq., of Dover, and sung at the celebration of the 4th July,” to the tune, “Come let us prepare.”

If Jefferson did not himself make the scrap-book in question, it must have been made for him and presented to him by some friend. It is easily conceivable that a friend might have in-

cluded in his clippings for such a purpose the above lines, being confident that Jefferson would enjoy the humor of them; but in another selection occurs the expression, *deist base*, among others of similar tenor, with evident reference to Jefferson; and it is hardly reasonable that a friend making a gift-book for the President would have ventured to include in it such opprobrious lines. If, therefore, additional proof were needed to convince us that the book is Jefferson's own work, it might be found here.

The Embargo and the conditions it produced may aid us in determining why such a miscellaneous collection of paper, as already remarked upon, was used in constructing the volume. Paper, under the most favorable circumstances, was doubtless much more expensive at the beginning of last century than it is now. When newspapers were frequently delayed several weeks in their appearance, owing to the lack of paper; and when, in prospect of a paper famine, touching appeals in bold-face type were made to the "fair dames and maidens," respectfully begging the privilege of purchasing their worn-out frocks, petticoats, and such other discarded raiment as might contribute to the "composition of paper," indicating when the ragman would call to make collections, people at large, and even the Chief Executive of the nation, must have been in a position to appreciate the value of the finished product. At best, the industry of paper manufacture was only in its infancy in America; hence, the various disabilities placed upon international trade, crowned by the paralyzing Embargo, rapidly reduced the supply and elevated the price of paper, as of many other things. But it was doubtless more than high prices and habitual frugality that caused Jefferson to be so economical in his use of paper. Inasmuch as he was the one mainly responsible for the Embargo, he perhaps felt that he ought to set a worthy example to the people at large, and thus urge them to make the best of the situation. It was a method of using to double advantage, if not of actually developing, home resources.

Next after the group of pieces on the Embargo we find more lyrics on Freedom, Liberty, Columbia, and the Fourth of July, with some on Peace and the Constitution. Then follow a miscellaneous lot, some humorous, some serious. Next in order

come eight Irish songs and poems; another miscellaneous lot; and then a number of compositions strongly marked by pathos: "The Emigrant's Grave;" "The Weeping Mother;" "The Exile of Erin;" "The Tear;" and "The Pilgrim." After other miscellaneous pieces there may be found a series of ten or more elegies; and following these is a sundry succession of compositions that close the volume.

Many of the clippings in the volume as a whole, as proved by occasional dates that appear upon them, were collected toward the latter part of Jefferson's second term as President. The several pieces on the Embargo were necessarily obtained after December 22, 1807. That some of the pieces found near the end of the collection were gathered toward the close of the long period of public service, we may well conclude from a study of their character — their headings, indeed, in certain instances. Here and there among the last miscellaneous group are to be seen the following titles: "To My Armchair;" "The Happy Fireside;" "The Pleasure of Retirement;" and "Home." The scene was soon to change from the forum to the farm, and the aging statesman was happy in the prospect. The red fields of Albemarle and the home upon the little mountain were rising more and more frequently before the eye of his musings, and he was growing anxious to hasten to them. The pastoral spirit was calling, and Arcady was at hand.

Jefferson's bent for method and system is illustrated not only by the obvious attempt, just indicated, to classify his scrap-book clippings, but also by the exact care with which they are joined together and pasted upon the pages. Much ingenuity is occasionally shown in arranging a piece that is printed on both sides, so that no part of the poem will be obscured. His interest in subjects that are scientific and practical rather than poetical is also illustrated. For example, there are one or two pieces on "Science;" there is one on an eclipse of the sun; there is an "Ode on Potatoes;" and, as we might expect, there is a poem on "Paper." The last is credited to Benjamin Franklin;² and in it different sorts of men and women are com-

² See Griswold, *Poets and Poetry of America*, p. 23.

pared to different sorts of paper: The fop to gilt paper; workmen to copy-paper; misers to brown paper; the spendthrift to sinking-paper; the demagogue to fool's-cap; the "hasty gentleman" to touch-paper; the innocent maid to white paper; the good great man to royal paper; and the poet to waste paper. Yet most of the compositions selected are on themes that lend themselves readily and more or less effectively to poetic expression.

Several of the pieces in the collection are translations from the German; and there are one or more each from the Italian, the Persian, the Latin, the Greek, and the French. There are not enough from any one of these languages to attract special notice; but the number of poems relating to Ireland and the Irish is so large that the reader can hardly escape the conclusion that the Emerald Isle and its people found in Jefferson a keen and abiding sympathy. There are no less than eighteen compositions on Ireland and the people of Ireland; and in addition to these there are ten poems by Thomas Moore, the Irish poet. Moore, while holding a British Government post in Bermuda, had but recently (1804) traveled in the United States; and although he complained most bitterly of the President's apparent indifference to him,³ his visit did much, no doubt, to revive or establish his reputation in the districts through which he passed. His *Anacreon* had appeared in 1800, and the *Poetical Works of Thomas Moore* the year following; and in spite of his strictures upon the President and his outspoken contempt for America in general, there was evidently a sort of craze in the country for Moore and his writings. This fact is shown sufficiently by the press clippings in Jefferson's collection. Moore is spoken of as "The Translator of Anacreon;" one of the miscellaneous effusions is signed "Anacreon;" three others are called "Anacreontics;" and three of the songs are to be sung to the tune of "Anacreon in Heaven."

When, about the year 1814, Moore's *Irish Melodies* appeared in the United States, Jefferson developed a great liking for them. "Why," said he, when the book was first put into

³ See Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, Vol. III, pp. 115-119.

his hands, "this is the little man who satirized me so!" But as he read along he presently exclaimed, "He *is* a poet after all," and from that time forward Moore and Burns were familiarly read while Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others were neglected.

But it is evident that in 1807 and thereabouts Jefferson's concern for the Irish and their trials must have had a more direct and comprehensive basis than his brief acquaintance in 1804 with the perfumed young official of the British Government. The eighteen songs of Erin, as already indicated, are not credited to Moore. Some are old Irish ballads, and others were then new compositions dealing with the current troubles in Ireland or with the sufferings of Irish exiles in distant lands. All struggles for liberty and the hardships resulting from the failure of such struggles found a ready response at all times in Jefferson's nature; and the sorrows of the Irish patriots affected him deeply. The Wexford rising of 1798, the defeat of the insurgents at Vinegar Hill, and the consequent reign of terror, followed in 1803 by Emmet's outbreak, its easy suppression, and the speedy execution of the gifted leader, must have seemed to the great apostle of human liberties like what the history of his own people might have been a few years earlier if fate had denied them victory. Besides, these unfortunate heroes were the sons of Fingal and Ossian. His large collection of Irish poems not only shows his own personal interest in the Irish people, but also affords evidence that the periodicals of the time were directing public attention in great measure towards the same people.

The ten pieces credited to "Thomas Moore, Esq., the celebrated translator of Anacreon, etc.," are the following: "Ode Upon Morning;" "Lines to a young lady;" "To the Invisible Girl;" "Strange Feelings;" "Song;" Antiphonal song; "Rondeau;" "Stanzas;" "A Ballad;" and "A Ballad." The last was written at Norfolk, Virginia, and deals with a tragic romance of the Dismal Swamp.

Most of the other pieces in the collection, taken as a whole, are anonymous; but occasionally the names of the authors are given, and now and then one finds a name that is still familiar.

There are two pieces by Joel Barlow. One is an extract from the *Columbiad*; the other is a composition on the "Discoveries of Captain Lewis" (or the Lewis and Clark expedition across the Rocky Mountains). One lyric, "The Land of Love and Liberty," is by Thomas Paine; two pieces were written by Robert Treat Paine, Jr.; and one piece, "The Fowler," is the work of James Montgomery. Two "Odes," the one on King George III, already mentioned, and another for the year 1801, were composed by "Henry James Pye, esq., Poet Laureat." There is one poem by Burns, the gem, "To Mary in Heaven;" and there are three by Southey: "Woman!" "The Death of Wallace;" and "The Battle of Blenheim."

If Jefferson had indicated in each case the name of the particular paper from which each clipping was taken, with the date of the issue, he would have added a value to his work that he could hardly have estimated at the time. This, however, he did not do. Many of the pieces had been reprinted from other periodicals, as is indicated by the frequent prefixed statement, "From the" Occasionally that form is varied by this one: "For the" In such cases it seems fair to conclude that we have given the name of the paper from which Jefferson made the clipping. Poems are found among the reprinted pieces from at least thirty different papers, American and English; and it is possible, by the method just indicated, to identify at least sixteen of the periodicals from which the clippings were actually made by Jefferson.

The publications from which verses were most frequently copied were the *Port Folio*, the *American Citizen*, the *Political Observatory*, the *Boston Gazette*, the *Aurora*, the *Evening Post*, the *Trenton True American*, and the *New York Daily Advertiser*; others from which one or more pieces had been reprinted may be catalogued as follows:

London Courier;
The Hornet ("A Democratic paper, published at
 Fredericktown, Maryland");
Maryland Journal;
Norfolk Herald;
The Chronicle;
The Balance;

*True American ;
National Intelligencer ;
St. James Chronicle ;
London Sporting Magazine ;
Newburyport Herald ;
Farmer's Register ;
Literary Mirror ;
Public Advertiser ;
Virginia Argus ;
The Repertory ;
Monthly Anthology ;
Providence Phenix ;
Providence Gazette ;
Salem Register ;
Connecticut Gazette.*

Amidst ephemeral verse from forgotten newspapers it appears strange to come across the following stanza from old Thomas Sackville's *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), a poem on the fall of princes:

“What doth avail to have a princely place,
A name of honour, and a high degree ;
To come by kindred of a noble race,
Except we princely, worthy, noble be !
The fruit declares the goodness of the tree.
Do brag no more of birth, or lineage then ;
For virtue, grace and manners make the man.”

But the fine democratic flavor of the lines seems to have been greatly relished by the Sage of Monticello, as is evident from the pencilled note on the margin, probably by Jefferson's own hand, “As good now as when it was written.”

The periodicals most frequently clipped were the *Long Island Weekly Intelligencer*, the *Enquirer*, and the *Staunton Eagle*. Among the other papers from which clippings were made, it is possible to identify the following:

*Western American ;
Virginia Argus ;
The Journal ;
Scioto Gazette ;
Kentucky Gazette ;
Pittsfield Sun ;
The Whig ;
The Advocate ;
National Ægis ;*

*True Republican;
Orleans Gazette;
The Informant;
Pennsylvania Herald.*

These catalogues may be of interest not only in showing the wide range of Jefferson's reading in periodical "literature," but also in preserving the names of a considerable number of papers now deceased. Only a few of these publications of a century ago have remained unto the present in vigorous life.

The value of this collection of poems, judged by approved literary standards, is perhaps not very high, though, as we have seen, there are a number of individual pieces of excellent quality. Judged by the ordinary standards of newspaper verse of a hundred years ago, or by the standards of the same class of verse of the present day, it is certainly above the average. This simply means, of course, that Jefferson was in some measure discriminating in his selections; that he chose what he regarded as the best, while discarding what he thought unworthy of a place in his collection. It is apparent, however, that he was guided in many cases by political sentiments and the practical interests of industrial and commercial life; yet it must be evident to even the casual reader that many of the pieces chosen were selected for qualities that are purely or chiefly literary. Therein is confirmation of the fact that Jefferson had the poetic spirit and feeling in considerable measure, and that his poetical tastes were not only keen but also in some degree cultivated.

Along with this manifestation of a taste and love for poetry, we find revealed many other qualities of the man — some already well known, others less familiar. From a study of the volume under consideration it is easy to see what were the objects of his ruling passions: liberty, freedom, country. He loved to have his name linked with that of liberty, as more than one of these poems shows. Some of his selections indicate that he was not without a feeling of vanity; yet his interest was as wide as human life, and his magnanimity is remarkable. Reference has already been made to the ode celebrating the birthday of King George III, invoking for the old monarch longer life and

happiness, and the doggerel aimed at Jefferson himself as "deist base" and as a supporter of the hated Embargo. These pieces and others of kindred sorts were collected and pasted in the book as carefully as any others. Especially notable are some verses on General Hamilton, reprinted from the *American Citizen*:

Wafted by our nation's sigh,
Thy soul is gone to realms above,
To meet its Washington on high,
Kindred souls! pure as the dove.

Behold the patriot's bosom burning,
The virgin's tears descend for thee;
Columbia's sons indignant mourning
The soldier of humanity.

Our empire's union's great defender,
Lies mouldering in the silent tomb;
Its foes will now strive hard to rend her;
Uncertain is our nation's doom!

Great Hamilton! thy country's story
To latest time will clearly prove,
How great thy worth and martial glory,
Embalm'd with all Columbia's love.

Whether or not Jefferson loved Hamilton as a man, he did not agree with his political views, as is well understood. He was suspicious of too strong a "union;" and "empire" was a bane of his waking thoughts. Even if he and Hamilton had been friendly rivals in the same political party, a narrow sort of vanity might have caused him to resent such unmeasured praise of the other. It must have required some magnanimity in the real sense of the term to enable him to give this decided recognition to the popularity of his chief opponent. It should be observed, moreover, that this recognition was not given on a public rostrum, with a flourish of trumpets, but in the privacy of the scholar's study, and in a form that was intended for few eyes besides his own.

Many of the poems under review have a rollicking humor, and not a few are charged with pathos. A tender sentiment for the fair sex is more than once in evidence; and intemperance, in

the forms of drunkenness and dissoluteness, is decried. Love of peace determined the selection of many of the numbers, yet at the same time outspoken arraignments of the enemies of the country are also given a place. There is manifested a decided regard for morals and religion. If we are not justified in saying that certain pieces show Jefferson as having a religious nature, we must at least be permitted to say that he had reached a stage of life when he felt an occasional if not a frequent concern for the future. One of his selections is entitled "The Mansion of Rest," in which the soul of man, after trying in a vain hope to realize the promises of flattery, fancy, the siren voice, friendship, pleasure, and prudence, at last finds consolation in religion:

She [Prudence] spoke, and half vanish'd in air;
For she saw mild Religion appear,
With a smile that would banish Despair,
And dry up the penitent's tear;
Doubts and fears from my bosom were driven,
As, pressing the cross to her breast,
And pointing serenely to Heaven,
She shew'd me the Mansion of Rest.

Another piece in the collection deals with theology of Swedenborg; and some of the things in it that probably attracted Jefferson to it are the unity of God; the power of love; order; and truth.

In conclusion, I beg leave to anticipate the possible charge that this essay has not been kept strictly within the limits prescribed by the heading. So far as known, nothing has hitherto been written or published concerning the collection of poems herein discussed, and therefore the liberty has been taken of describing it somewhat in detail, not only because it shows Jefferson's tastes and character, but also because it preserves in compendious form certain facts that may be worth while, pertaining to his methods of work, his habits, and the times in which he lived. Neither this paper nor the ancient volume itself should be taken as sufficient ground for declaring Jefferson a poet in any serious respect; yet either ought to prove that he had a decided instinct for poetry, and that his poetic taste was by no means uncultivated. The choice of most of the verses he has

preserved for us was determined by the ruling passions of his soul: Liberty and national freedom; a few may have been chosen because of personal vanity; more were perhaps selected because of a wholesome magnanimity and world-wide vision; but some, and these a choice number, were treasured up because they imaged forth in forms of beauty the offspring of the singing heart, and his heart made answer.

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